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14.42 hrs.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION UNDER RULE 357

Title : Regarding clarification given by Shri Mani Shanker Aiyar in reply to a reported defamatory statement and personal attack made against him by another member in the House.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Before that, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar wants to give personal explanation. It is item No. 30. Please be brief.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (MAYILADUTURAI): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, in the course of my intervention in the debate on the No-Confidence Motion on 19 August, 2003, the hon. Shri Kirti Jha Azad made a statement which I was unable to hear because of the din in the House. Subsequently, looking through the transcript of the day's proceedings, I was shocked to find that the hon. Shri Azad made the following assertion, which I quote. He said to me:

> "Your brother who is an editor of *The Economic Times* has written that while studying in Cambridge University, you were collecting money for the Chinese when the 1962 Chinese aggression took place."
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> He went on to ask:
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> "Tell us whether what he wrote about you is correct or not?"

As I had not heard Shri Azad's question, I now seek the leave of the House to answer him.

First, I have never collected any money for the Chinese on any occasion.

Second, there is no question of my having collected money for the Chinese when the 1962 Chinese aggression took place.

Third, my brother, Swaminathan Ankeslesaria Aiyar, who is a consulting editor with *The Economic Times*, has never ever written anywhere that while studying at the Cambridge University, I collected money for the Chinese when the 1962 Chinese aggression took place.

The House will agree with me that before baseless allegations impugning the integrity and patriotism of a fellow-Member are irresponsibly hurled on the sacred floor of this House, the least an honourable Member should do is to verify *prima facie* whether the source he is quoting has in fact anywhere made the statement cited.

I challenge hon. Shri Kirti Jha Azad to produce a single line written by my brother anywhere, which even tangentially suggests that I am a traitor to my beloved country. He categorically asserted that my brother had written this. I equally categorically reject the allegation. I have checked with my brother. Not only has my brother not written any such things, I have never betrayed my country, whether as a student at Cambridge or at any time before or at any time thereafter.

I would, therefore, request the hon. Member to withdraw the allegations made against me.

However, although Shri Kirti Jha Azad's name has been specifically mentioned in the Revised List of Business at Item No.30, he has not had the courtesy to turn up here to listen to what I have had to say. I do not know whether he is going to return to this House in the Thirteenth Lok Sabha, before it closes in a few hours from now, to withdraw this allegation here. If he fails to put in an appearance here, I would appeal to the Chair to ensure that this baseless, defamatory, mischievous, utterly unacceptable statement made by him is expunged from the proceedings.